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BOOK REVIEW

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**Egle Becchi et Dominique Julia [trad. Jean-Pierre Bardos et al.]
Trad. de: Storia dell'infanzia: L'histoire de l'enfance en Occident.
Vol. 1 'De l'Antiquité au XVIIe siècle'; vol. 2 'Du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours'**

Paris: Seuil 1998. 2 Volumes, illustrated, vol. 1 475 pp, vol. 2 515 pp. ISBN (vol. 1) 2-020-17298-4; ISBN (vol. 2) 2-020-33160-8. Each volume FF170.00

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During the twentieth century, the discoveries in paediatrics and paediatric surgery have been extremely numerous, and impressive reductions in terms of mortality and morbidity of infants and children have been achieved. In parallel to this, a major shift in concepts of infancy and childhood has taken place, and the position of the child in Western societies has completely changed. Concepts of infancy and childhood in various parts of the world are even farther apart and have led to conflicts about how a child should be educated and what are his fundamental rights.

For every paediatrician interested in the mutual interaction between the concept of childhood in different societies and the practice of paediatrics, the book by Egle Becchi and Dominique Julia, in two volumes, can be highly recommended. It leads the reader through

many centuries, starting with chapters on the position of the child in Greek and Roman societies B.C. Very well referenced, it provides the reader with elements allowing a better understanding of the interaction between the position of the child in society and the development of paediatrics.

The book closes with a chapter on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which gives a rich description of the changes in paedagogic approaches. Besides all of the information it contains on the evolution of concepts in the Western part of the world, it may also improve our understanding of current concepts of childhood in other parts of the world.

A book to take with you on a vacation...